



beyondblue

# *beyondblue* National Workplace Program

Learn how to manage common mental  
health problems in the workplace

*A leading cause  
of disability*

*Reduced productivity*

*Over six million working days lost*

*Untreated depression costs  
Australian organisations  
\$642,000 per 1,000 employees.<sup>1</sup>*



## The *beyondblue* National Workplace Program helps managers and employees to:



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increase awareness and understanding of depression and anxiety in the workplace



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decrease stigma by improving attitudes towards people who experience depression and anxiety



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improve skills to recognise the signs and symptoms of depression and anxiety, and be confident to assist a colleague or employee who may be experiencing these conditions.

<sup>1</sup> Hilton, M. (2004) *Assessing the financial return on investment of good management strategies and the WORC Project*. The University of Queensland and The Queensland Centre for Mental Health Research, 2004.

## WHY IS EMPLOYEE MENTAL HEALTH AN ISSUE FOR YOUR ORGANISATION?

Depression and anxiety disorders are the second leading cause of disability and mortality in Australia.<sup>2</sup> Nearly three million people experience depression and/or anxiety each year,<sup>3</sup> and unlike many physical illnesses, it impacts on people during their prime working years. Effective treatments are available, yet 50 per cent of people do not seek treatment.<sup>4</sup>

The impact of depression in the workplace includes<sup>5</sup>:

- three to four days off work per month for each person experiencing depression
- over six million working days lost each year in Australia
- 12 million days of reduced productivity each year.

Research indicates that work and the workplace impacts on a person's mental health, either positively or negatively.

In turn, an employee's mental health affects the workplace. Mental health problems (such as depression and anxiety disorders) are common and they have an impact on individuals, their families, co-workers and workplaces.

Mental health problems also have a direct impact on workplaces through increased absenteeism, reduced productivity and increased costs.

Results of the VicHealth and Melbourne University study *Estimating the economic benefits of eliminating job strain as a risk factor for depression*<sup>6</sup> found that 'job strain', where workers have little control over their job but are under high pressure to perform, accounts for 17 per cent of depression in working women and 13 per cent in working men.

According to this study, job-related depression costs the economy \$730 million every year. This includes lost productivity due to absenteeism and presenteeism and government-subsidised medical care, including counselling and antidepressants.


2 Begg S , Vos T, Barker B, Stevenson C, Stanley L & Lopez A (2007) *The burden of disease and injury in Australia 2003*. Cat. no. PHE 82. Canberra: AIHW.

3 Australian Bureau of Statistics (2008) *2007 National Survey of Mental Health and Wellbeing: Summary of Results* (4326.0). Canberra: ABS.

4 Ibid

5 Andrews G, Hall W, Teeson M and Henderson S. *The Mental Health of Australians*. Mental Health Branch, Commonwealth Department of Health and Aged Care, 1999.

6 LaMontagne AD, Sanderson K, & Cocker F (2010) *Estimating the economic benefits of eliminating job strain as a risk factor for depression*. Victorian Health Promotion Foundation (VicHealth), Carlton, Australia. 37 pages.



This equates to \$11.8 billion over the average working lifetime, with the biggest loss accruing to employers through lost productivity. (The report also revealed an \$85 million cost of absences for depressed workers who do not have access to paid sick leave, a significant cost to employees.)

Organisations have a duty of care to staff and need to be aware of their obligations under the Disability Discrimination Act and Privacy Act.

## WHAT CAN YOU AND YOUR ORGANISATION DO?

Your organisation can raise awareness about mental health problems, decrease the associated stigma and encourage early intervention so that people seek help early.

Your organisation can also implement prevention initiatives to reduce the incidence and/or impact. This type of proactive approach will minimise the impact on the individual, the work team and the organisation.

## WHAT IS THE NATIONAL WORKPLACE PROGRAM?

The National Workplace Program (NWP) is an awareness, early intervention and prevention program, specifically for workplace settings, which aims to increase the knowledge and skills of staff and managers to address mental health problems in the workplace.

The NWP utilises an evidence-based approach and focuses on:

- how to recognise a work colleague who may be experiencing depression or an anxiety disorder
- how to support someone to get help
- good management strategies such as return to work plans and making adjustments in the workplace. (The NWP provides information as well as practical strategies that can be introduced within the workplace.)

The NWP is designed to meet the specific needs of organisations and has been extensively evaluated across a range of organisational settings throughout Australia.

Since 2004 the NWP has been:

- presented to over 65,000 participants in over 600 organisations across Australia.
- shown to significantly:
  - increase awareness
  - decrease stigma
  - improve attitudes
  - increase confidence to assist someone to seek help.
- licensed in the UK through the Centre of Mental Health, following an independent evaluation by The University of Nottingham and a successful pilot.
- awarded the Australian Institute of Training and Development (AITD) *Excellence in a Learning Resource* award 2008.
- successfully adapted for targeted audiences including construction, mining, police, legal, accounting, rural settings and professional sports.

The NWP has been delivered to a wide cross section of Australian workplaces, including:

- Commonwealth, state/territory and local governments
- Large corporate organisations
- “Blue collar” industries (e.g. mining, construction, and transport)
- Small and medium enterprises
- Not-for-profits
- Professional associations
- Professional sporting bodies
- Rural businesses.



## NWP PRESENTATIONS AND WORKSHOPS

A strategic objective for the NWP is to increase the reach and impact of *beyondblue*'s key messages into Australian workplaces.

To maximise reach and impact across a broad range of industry sectors and workplaces, *beyondblue* has appointed Davidson Trahaire Corpsych (DTC) as the national licensee for the NWP.

*beyondblue* retains ownership of the NWP, continues to update the program and monitors the quality of the program delivery.

DTC are responsible for all operational aspects of the program, including enquiries/sales, bookings, logistics and delivery of the program to standards set by *beyondblue*.

Sessions are specifically designed for senior executives, managers and general staff, and have been designed with flexibility to suit a range of organisational environments and industries.

Facilitators have extensive workplace mental health knowledge and experience, tertiary qualifications and proven skills and experience in adult education.

# WHAT TYPES OF WORKPLACE PRESENTATIONS AND WORKSHOPS ARE AVAILABLE?

*beyondblue* offers a range of education options that are designed for different organisational audiences.

## 1. Senior Executive Briefing: mental health in the workplace

Recommended session length: 45-60 minutes

Maximum participant numbers: 15

Designed for: Executives and senior management

This briefing is designed to highlight the importance of mental health in the workplace to senior executives. The presentation incorporates a business case for tackling the most common mental health problems in the workplace and leadership strategies to address mental health in the workplace.

## 2. Organisational awareness: mental health in the workplace

Recommended session length: One hour

Maximum participant numbers: 100

Designed for: Staff at all levels within the workplace

This presentation is designed to increase awareness among staff members about depression and anxiety disorders, their impact and support for mental wellbeing.

## 3. Employee awareness to action: mental health in the workplace

Recommended session length: Two hours

Maximum participant numbers: 25

Designed for: General staff groups (excluding managers, supervisors and team leaders)

This workshop is designed to increase awareness among general staff members about the most common mental health problems in Australia and their impact on the workplace. Participants will also, through the use of DVD case studies and structured discussions, increase their confidence to approach a colleague they may be concerned about.



#### 4. Manager awareness, impact and action: mental health in the workplace

Recommended session length: Three hours

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Maximum participant numbers: 25

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Designed for: Managers, supervisors and team leaders

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This workshop is designed for managers to enhance their knowledge about the impact of the most common mental health problems on individuals, the workplace environment and the organisation as a whole. Through the use of DVD case studies and structured discussions, participants will become more confident in the principles and planning required to approach an employee they may be concerned about. Participants will also spend time developing management strategies to address mental health within their organisation.

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#### 5. Strategies and solutions for HR Professionals: mental health in the workplace

Recommended session length: Four hours

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Maximum participant numbers: 20

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Designed for: Managers and staff in HR, OH&S, Return to Work or Injury Management

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This workshop is designed specifically to enable HR professionals to promote mental health awareness and to meet the challenge of addressing depression, anxiety and related disorders in the workplace. Participants will be guided through the fundamentals of mental health problems in the workplace, including an examination of prevention strategies at an organisational level, how to develop appropriate policies and procedures, and how to advise managers on addressing mental health problems with their staff.

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#### **Can sessions be made shorter or longer?**

Some organisations request that workshops be delivered in shorter or longer timeframes than those recommended. The NWP has been developed over specific timeframes in order to meet the learning outcomes of that session. Whilst there is a small degree of flexibility built into each session, each has been designed to ensure that participants have appropriate timeframes to receive the information and discuss the content. Experience has provided a strong evidence base for these timeframes.



## WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS AND OUTCOMES OF THE NWP?

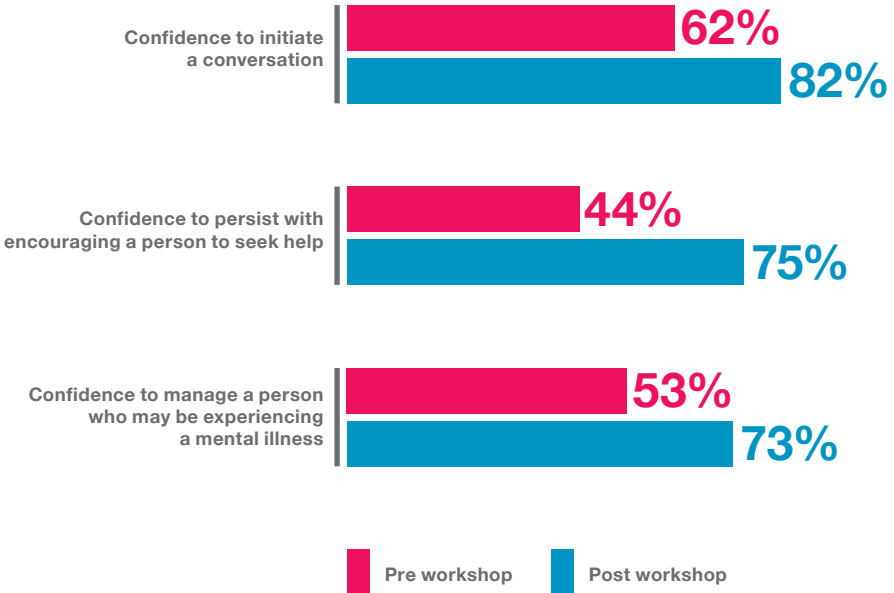
External evaluations of *beyondblue*'s National Workplace Program show that implementation of *beyondblue* workshops result in the following outcomes for participants:

- ✓ Increased awareness and understanding about the most common mental health problems in the workplace.
- ✓ A greater understanding of the impact of these problems on the lives of people who are affected, including their work performance.
- ✓ Improved attitudes towards a colleague with depression or a related disorder and decreased stigma.
- ✓ Increased willingness and confidence to assist and/or manage a person who may be experiencing depression or a related disorder.
- ✓ A greater understanding of managers' responsibilities to staff and the organisation as they relate to these issues.
- ✓ Increased awareness of support services available for staff to seek help.

Our workshops have been consistently rated highly by participants.  
For example:

- ✓ **98 per cent** of participants would recommend *beyondblue* training to others.
- ✓ **95 per cent** of participants rated the relevance of the content to their job as being *good* or *excellent*.
- ✓ **96 per cent** of participants rated the quality of the presenter as being *good* or *excellent*.

## Increased confidence to manage common mental health problems (Managers' workshops 2009-10)



### National Workplace Program exported to the UK

The *beyondblue* National Workplace Program was piloted successfully in the UK through the Centre of Mental Health (CMH) after it conducted a global search for an early intervention program for workplaces. As part of this process, it was evaluated independently by The University of Nottingham in the UK. The program is now licensed to CMH and is being delivered to workplaces throughout the UK.

## ONGOING AWARENESS-RAISING AND INVOLVEMENT

To help reaffirm your organisation's commitment to raising awareness of depression and anxiety and promoting a mentally healthy workplace, *beyondblue* has a range of freely available information materials (including fact sheets, wallet cards, booklets, magnets etc.) to distribute to your staff and/or clients.

In fact, organisations can employ a range of strategies to strengthen mental health promotion messages in their workplaces.

- Display *beyondblue* materials in areas of public access (e.g. reception) and lunch or tea rooms.
- Develop an intranet page with information on mental health, including links to the *beyondblue* website and info line.
- Distribute *beyondblue* wallet cards with helpline numbers, magnets, depression checklists and wristbands.
- Support events such as World Mental Health Day (10 October), Mental Health Week (October) and Movember (November).
- To coincide with the above events, organise a blue-themed day or activity for your workplace.
- Provide articles and updates about mental health topics in workplace newsletters.
- Play *beyondblue* TV ads in the workplace.
- Encourage colleagues to keep active – organise group activities during lunch time such as a walk, yoga class or a game in the park.
- Change your workplace “on-hold” message to raise awareness of depression and anxiety, and direct people to find out more by visiting the *beyondblue* website or calling the info line.
- Participate in presentations at trade shows or industry conferences to raise awareness across your industry sector.

There are many ways you can help raise awareness, this list is just a starting point. *beyondblue* can help you select appropriate materials to display in your workplace, assist with articles for workplace newsletters, and ideas for awareness-raising activities and fundraising.

## HOW DO I BOOK A NWP SESSION?

To make an enquiry or a booking for the National Workplace Program, contact Davidson Trahaire Corpsych



Call **1300 134 644**

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Email **mentalwellbeing@davcorp.com.au**

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For more information on the depression and anxiety in the workplace contact *beyondblue*



Call **03 9810 6161**

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Email **workplace@beyondblue.org.au**

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